

Iowa Outdoors
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.com

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

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**NEW PROGRAM AIMS AT HELPING THREATENED OR
ENDANGERED SPECIES IN IOWA**

DES MOINES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is looking for private landowners wanting to enhance and protect habitat critical to plant or animal species listed as threatened or endangered.

This new effort is part of a three-year project called the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) that allows the DNR to provide up to \$300,000 each year in grants to help landowners improve habitat. The focus of LIP is not tied to any crop base or farming practice, but is for all landowners who are looking to protect and enhance existing habitat in critical natural resource areas, said Kelly Smith, LIP coordinator for the DNR.

“We need the landowner to take the first step and contact one of our staff in the field,” Smith said. “Once they contact us, our staff will visit the site to see what habitat and species are present, then work on a plan to improve the habitat for those species.”

Land with any plant, bird, mammal, fish, butterfly or other species on the federal threatened or endangered list will be considered first; land with species listed in the Iowa as threatened or endangered would be considered second.

Smith said landowners can receive up to 75 percent of the cost to improve habitat on their land, and the DNR is working to identify other sources of funding to help offset the remaining cost.

“We are also trying to coordinate with other groups who are doing similar projects in the state,” she said.

The DNR has a list of private lands staff on the wildlife page on www.iowadnr.com, then click on private lands management.

For more information, contact Smith at 515-281-6247.

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WOOD DUCK BANDING EFFORT BENEFITS IOWA WATERFOWL HUNTERS

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

We were in luck. As we pulled up to the slope on an Iowa River back channel yesterday morning, the wood ducks tried to scatter. They had traded freedom for a free meal of shelled corn, though. They now had the wire sides of the live-trap to look through...for a few minutes, anyway.

Around Iowa this month, wildlife workers from the Department of Natural Resources are trapping, banding and releasing 2,000 wood ducks. Their annual success has made Iowa the number one state or province in North America in banding—and recording information on—the reclusive woodie. By the summer’s end, Iowa’s 12-year total will be pushing 50,000. And that has meant flexibility in setting seasons and limits here.

For the moment, though, Dennis Proctor and Matt Bunker from the Coralville wildlife unit were more interested in attaching the tiny aluminum bands to each bird’s leg and recording the numbers and information about each bird. “You can see from the tail feathers that this is an immature bird,” explained Proctor. “The ends are still ‘pointed’. They haven’t fully developed yet. Also, the bill is starting to show some color. The white chin stripe is also indicative of a male. He’s getting a green tinge on the top of his head, too.” The next bird was an adult female. Proctor pointed out the full, rounded tail plumage. “The wing feather tips have a white teardrop pattern. On the males, those tips would be straight across. Also, this female’s bill is brown. It doesn’t have the coloration of a male.”

Male-female. Young-adult. All the data goes into a report that eventually lands on a desk at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Since ducks are migratory birds, that agency sets seasons and harvest limits. A complicated formula...and a little state by state lobbying helps lead to those decisions. One fact that can’t be overlooked, though, is the number of wood ducks showing up in Iowa. As the number two ‘bird in the bag’, come hunting season, wood duck banding data is critical. Iowa has been allowed to allot five

of its duck season days to a short September season. That option stems from Iowa showing that wood duck populations are doing well; reversing a downward trend apparent in the mid-20th century. “We’ve been ranked number one in wood ducks banded for years,” notes Proctor. “Our daily limit (all season) is two wood ducks. If the population would go down, we could lose some of those (limit) ducks. That is because of the banding data.”

As each duck was banded, it was released, some bailing out with the distinctive whistle, as it put mileage between the ordeal of the trap and their next stop. Not so much trauma, though, to keep some from a return trip. One of Wednesday’s eight birds was a ‘recapture’. It had been banded Monday evening, but opted to push his way in for another free meal 36 hours later. From there, though, the workers removed the wire throats that restrict the birds, once in. “We’ll leave them open three or four days, to get them used to feeding on the corn a little better,” explains Proctor. “Today’s (eight) ducks were the most we have seen at one site. We need more than that to make it worthwhile.”

Dry weather is hampering some trapping efforts, across Iowa. In some cases, heat stress has caused acorns to drop early; attracting wood ducks to their favorite food. Lower stream and pond levels make for longer waddles from the security of the water to the dry-land traps. On the other hand, workers from the Lake Odessa area to the southeast have banded 600 birds, nearly one-third of the state quota.

Early season hunters will appreciate that effort, as they get into their September blinds.

###

CALL OF THE FALL SENDS CAMPERS TO IOWA STATE PARKS

DES MOINES – Labor Day weekend marks the end of the camping season for some, but is the beginning of the camping season for many Iowa campers. Many Iowa state parks have lower, off-season rates which is just one benefit to late summer, early fall camping.

“Many people consider fall camping better than during the summer because of the smaller crowds, fewer insects and the trees are turning to their fall colors,” said Jim Lawson, supervisor with the DNR for state parks in south central Iowa. “Some of the concession operators in our parks will have different hours of operation, so I would recommend people calling ahead if they are interested in any boat or other rental information.”

Another benefit to fall camping is that, as the water cools from summer’s heat, fishing improves.

“Fall can be some of the best fishing we have,” said Greg Van Fosson, supervisor with the DNR for central Iowa state parks. “I look forward to fall fishing almost as much as fishing in the spring.”

The off-season camping rates are in effect for most state parks although the more heavily used parks, including Elk Rock, Ledges, the Gull Point complex, Pike’s Peak and Backbone will continue with the peak season rates through Oct. 31. A complete list of parks and rates is available at www.exploreiowaparks.com.

Lawson said the Explore Iowa Parks camping contest is still underway and has two months remaining before the entries are due.

“The Explore Iowa Parks camping contest continues through October 31, so campers still have time if they want to participate,” Lawson said.

Campers must keep their camping registration originals and mail them to DNR by Oct. 31. Campers who mail in registrations for five of the participating parks get a free subscription to the Iowa Conservationist, the colorful magazine published bi-monthly by DNR. Those who camp at seven parks get the subscription and a special parks T-shirt. Campers who stay at 10 different parks get those two prizes, plus a chance in a drawing for one year of free camping in Iowa State Parks, Recreation Areas and Forests; a Trek mountain bike or a \$100 gift certificate from Cabela's.

The mountain bike, valued at \$240, was donated by Bike World located in Des Moines, West Des Moines and Ames. The \$100 gift certificate was donated by Cabela's in Prairie du Chien, Wisc.

The Explore Iowa Parks program is open to residents and nonresidents. For more information contact the DNR at 515/242-6233 or go to www.exploreiowaparks.com

For more information, contact Lawson at 515-281-5876 or Van Fosson at 515-281-6157.

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DEER HUNTING AND MORE

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Deer hunters this fall and winter will be able to purchase more licenses, and have an extra season for hunting in most of the state. Licenses for the fall/winter deer seasons and fall turkey season are now on sale.

The special late season, January 11-18, has been expanded from the southern couple tiers of counties to statewide. The state Natural Resource Commission (NRC) also approved an additional 30,150 antlerless deer tags, and allowing hunters in the early muzzleloader season, first shotgun or disabled hunter season to purchase an additional *antlerless* tag. The changes stem from 2003 legislative action and increased deer population.

“Our surveys showed the population up about 10 percent, after last season,” explains Willy Suchy, wildlife biologist for the Department of Natural Resources. “By putting more antlerless tags in each county and by expanding that late January season to all the state, we can deal with it that way.”

The later January season in the south and the sale of antlerless tags were established several years ago, to increase the harvest of does. A hunter’s first tag costs \$26. Each additional tag is \$11. Each county in the late season had a specific number of tags available. “Last year, the January season sold out in every county,” says Suchy. “This spreads that availability to the rest of the state. It might take away from some of those southern counties, though, if hunters decide to stay closer to home to hunt antlerless deer.”

The addition of antlerless tags for early muzzleloader and first shotgun season hunters is another incentive to take does. Traditionally, more hunters pass up does for bucks in those seasons. “This provides an opportunity for them to take the first doe they see. That provides them with venison. They can still go for the trophy buck,” assesses Suchy, saying it could also reduce the harvest of yearling bucks, allowing for more trophy class bucks in years ahead. The upcoming late September-early October hunt for disabled hunters also offers the extra antlerless tag option.

The NRC approval for additional county antlerless tags pushes the quota to 53,500 statewide. A hunter can now purchase three such tags, instead of two. “The added season and tags are a good response,” offers Loren Forbes, vice-president of the Iowa Wildlife Federation. “We need to get the idea across to hunters that taking more does is the most effective way to control Iowa’s deer herd.” Forbes foresees an increase in venison donations and ‘hunters helping the hungry’ type campaigns.

The NRC also approved special deer hunts in 22 locations; primarily parks and urban areas where high deer populations cannot be dealt with through regular hunting seasons. They range from a 500 tag quota across all seasons in Linn County to a 35 tag archery zone at Lake Manawa State Park. The special hunts target antlerless deer, although an increasing number feature several ‘any sex’ tags available, as incentives. An ‘any sex’ tag allows a hunter to try for a buck, after taking a doe.

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of September 2, 2003

www.iowadnr.com

The Iowa Fishing Report is released every other week from August into the fall. For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Walleyes can be caught throughout the lake using live bait harnesses tipped with a leech or night crawler, although fishing has slowed. Most walleye are under the 14-inch minimum length limit. Yellow perch fishing is good on the south end. Movement is required as the perch are scattered. Bluegills and crappies are being caught while perch fishing. Smallmouth bass are being caught on Big Stoney and Little Stoney points in 12 to 15 feet of water.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): Bluegill fishing is excellent using a leech under a bobber in 15 to 20 feet of water in Echo Bay and Hayward's Bay. Also, fish the deep weed edges with a night crawler or wax worm and a split shot. Smallmouth bass are good in 12 to 16 feet of water on the rock piles. Try a 1/16-ounce plain jig with a crawfish or piece of night crawler. Surface baits are working when the fish are active. Anglers are also catching some smallmouth on leeches in Echo Bay and Hayward's Bay. Some smaller walleye are being caught along the weed lines using a leech and a bobber or crankbaits, and using leeches in Echo Bay and Hayward's Bay. Some walleyes are being caught using deep diving crankbaits. Yellow perch are being caught trolling a jig and wiggler in deeper water in Echo Bay and Hayward's Bay.

East Okoboji (Dickinson): Channel catfish are biting at the north end using stink bait or crawdads. Anglers are having nice catches of legal sized walleyes trolling spinners and night crawlers off the weed lines when there is a good chop on the water. Troll crankbaits for bottom hugging fish. Some walleyes are being caught at the north end. Anglers are catching bluegills and crappies at the north end using little crappie jigs tipped with wigglers. Some yellow perch are being caught at the north end. Anglers are catching lots of white bass at the north end by the hatchery using small, white spinners.

Minnewashta (Dickinson): Anglers are catching white bass on small white spinner baits.

Little Sioux River (Dickinson and Clay): Channel catfish fishing is excellent using dip baits, sour clams and night crawlers.

West Fork Des Moines River (Emmet): Channel catfish fishing is excellent using dip baits, sour clams and night crawlers.

Lake Pahoja (Lyon): Channel catfish fishing continues to be good. Use chicken liver around the brush piles.

Willow Creek (Osceola): Bass fishing is good using top-water lures.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass fishing is excellent. Fish around the rock reefs, drift the north shore or fish from the public docks for the best action. Use minnows and cut bait. Try different spots until locating a school of fish. Channel catfish

are good using chicken liver, stink bait and chubs. The rush beds in the west end, rock reefs and wind blown shorelines are the best spots. Walleye fishing remains slow. A few walleye are hitting crankbaits and an occasional fish is caught while fishing yellow bass.

Black Hawk Lake (Sac): Channel catfish are excellent using crawdads near rock areas or fishing into the wind.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Fishing is good for channel catfish on a variety of baits. White bass fishing is good all over the lake. Anglers are catching a few walleyes.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Southwest

Green Valley (Union): Crappie fishing is good in the structure. Channel catfish fishing is good using liver, night crawlers or cut baits. Largemouth bass fishing is good.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Channel catfish can be caught using suspended crawlers or liver off the steep points. Some bluegills are being caught on the outside weed edges.

Three Mile (Union): Walleyes are good using night crawlers or crankbaits on the roadbed and main deeper points in 5 to 12 feet of water. Channel catfish are still being caught on cut bait off the rocks and around the fish cleaning station. Largemouth bass fishing is good. Bluegills are being caught on the outside of the weed-lines or on the tops of the fish mounds. Crappies can be caught drift fishing deeper water or over the top of the brush piles.

Twelve Mile (Union): Channel catfish fishing is still good on cut bait and liver.

Little River (Decatur): Channel catfish is best using cut bait and liver in the bays. Some crappies can be caught drift fishing open water.

Icaria (Adams): Channel catfish are still being caught everywhere using cut bait and liver.

Viking (Montgomery): Crappie fishing is fair using tube jigs tipped with a minnow or minnows suspended from a bobber around brush piles or suspended in 8 to 10 feet of water. Catfish fishing has been good on liver. Bluegills are fair with jigs and night crawlers.

Cold Springs (Cass): Catfish are being caught on liver and prepared baits, especially toward evening.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Channel catfish are excellent using liver or prepared baits.

Greenfield (Adair): Fishing is good to excellent for channel catfish in the early morning and evening hours using liver.

Orient (Adair): Channel catfish are good using prepared stink bait or cut fish.

Nodaway (Adair): Fishing is good to excellent for channel catfish in the early morning and evening hours using liver.

Morman Trail (Adair): Channel catfish are good in the early morning and evening hours using liver. Largemouth bass fishing is fair.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Fishing is fair for 8-inch crappies on jigs/minnows around brush piles. Channel catfish are good on liver or prepared baits. Largemouth bass fishing is good.

Willow Lake (Harrison): Channel catfish fishing is excellent using liver or prepared baits.

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Channel catfish fishing has been good using cut and stink baits. Bluegill fishing has been good using pieces of worm on 1/32-ounce jigs and slip bobbers.

Beaver Lake (Dallas): Bluegill fishing is fair using small jigs/worms and bobbers. Channel catfish fishing has been good, primarily early and late, using stink baits and liver.

Don Williams (Boone): Channel catfish fishing is fair using chicken liver and night crawlers. Crappie fishing is fair using minnows.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Channel catfish fishing has been good early and late using stink bait and chicken liver. Bluegill and redear fishing has been fair using night crawlers and wax worms. Largemouth bass - primarily sub-legal size fish - are being caught on crankbaits.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Channel catfish fishing has been good early and late using stink bait and chicken liver. Bluegills have been caught using traditional baits and lures. Largemouth bass fishing is fair using crankbaits, although, as in Lake Ahquabi, most fish are sub-legal.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Channel catfish fishing has been good using night crawlers. Crappie fishing has been fair for boat anglers in deeper water using jigs and minnows.

Easter Lake (Polk): Channel catfish fishing is good, with the majority of fish caught using stink bait. Crappie fishing has been fair, with some fish caught using jigs and minnows and/or worms.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Channel catfish fishing is good on stink bait. Bluegill fishing is fair using small hooks and tipped with worms. Crappie fishing is starting to pickup using various small jigs. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair with most anglers using top-water lures.

Saylorville Lake (Polk): White bass and walleye fishing is fair using crankbaits and shad raps. Channel catfish fishing has picked up using traditional baits such as stink baits, cut baits and night crawlers. **Tailwater:** White bass and crappie fishing has been fair using leadheads and twister tails. Channel catfish have been caught using traditional baits.

Lake Red Rock (Marion): White bass/wipers fishing has been fair in the larger bays (Whitebreast) and along the dam areas. Channel catfish fishing has been good along shorelines using stink baits, cut baits and night crawlers. A few anglers have been very successful crappie fishing in the larger coves. **Tailwater:** Crappie fishing has improved with a few white bass/wipers and channel catfish fishing reported caught.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 – 19: River levels are still very low making some backwater areas difficult to get in to fish. Water temps are in the lower 80s. Catfishing is fair to good on all pools. Cut bait and night crawlers are the best bait but chicken liver and stink bait are working well. Walleye fishing is slow on the wing dams. Look for walleyes on the outside of wing dams in deeper water. Bluegill fishing is beginning to pick up. Try fishing for bluegills near shallow stumps. Anglers are catching drum on night crawlers.

Lake Darling (Washington): Catfish are still biting....late evening seems to be the best time. Lots of fish being caught in the 1 to 2-pound range. The water is clear for this time of year. The bass anglers are catching some real nice fish on crankbaits during the morning hours.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): The contractor is working on the levee at the end of the Toolesboro road. This will cause the road to be closed at times, so be understanding. Both the inlet and outlet structures remain open to allow freshwater to enter the lake and yet keep the water levels to remain low for the summer drawdown. Wildlife will be closing the outlet tube in the near future to bring up the water levels for duck hunting.

Lake Geode (Henry): Bluegill fishing is fair in the morning and late evenings. The fish are still deep so try a small jig tipped with a wax worm or piece of night crawler.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been hitting on small jigs fished in the deeper areas of the lake. Channel catfish have been biting on prepared dip baits and minnows.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of lures, including spinner baits and top-water lures. Bluegills and crappies have been hitting on small jigs.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Bluegill and crappie have been hitting on small jigs drifted in the deeper part of the lake. Channel catfish continue to bite on night crawlers and liver.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Channel catfish have been biting on liver and night crawlers. Largemouth bass have been hitting artificial lures. Bluegills have been hitting small jigs fished on the outer edge of the weed line.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): Catfishing has been fair on dead shad and shad guts throughout the reservoir. Crappie fishing has been slow with a few crappies being caught off of deeper brush piles and drop-offs around the rock walls.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Anglers still report crappie fishing to be fair to good for fish up to 9 inches, with a few larger fish available. Fish can be difficult to locate; try fishing around deeper brush piles using jigs and minnows and slip bobber rigs. Channel catfish are being caught throughout the lake.

Pleasant Creek (Linn): Channel catfish have been biting well on chicken liver.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): Crappie fishing has been good on jigs. Channel catfish are being caught on worms and dip baits throughout the lake. Anglers are reminded that minnow usage is prohibited.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): Catfishing has been good on chicken liver and night crawlers.

Wapsipinicon River (Jones): Walleye and smallmouth bass fishing has been fair on crankbaits and jigs. Catfish have been biting well on dip baits.

Skunk River (Washington and Henry): There is both good news and bad news. The good news is the low water has the fish concentrated in the deeper holes. The bad news is that in most places it is almost impossible for boats to get very far up or down the river. For those with canoes or who like to wade, the fish seem to be biting on cut bait and chicken liver. If you can find them, a few grass frogs on your hook will really please the fish.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 – 15: The Mississippi River water levels are expected to stay steady this week and levels are very low. Water is clear and the temperature is 74 degrees. Use caution navigating on the Mississippi right now, as many stumps and rock piles are present throughout the river. Water level at Bellevue is 3.5 feet. A variety of fish can be caught in Pools 9-15, which is why angling on the Mississippi can be so much fun! You never know what you will catch. Catfish, freshwater drum, northern pike, largemouth and smallmouth bass are all being caught in good numbers along with several other species. Catfishing in **Pools 9-15** has been good on stink bait or night crawlers. Catfishing is generally done in current areas along the main channel borders, larger side channels and wing dams. Anchor above fallen trees, root wads and wing dams. By staying above the trees and luring the catfish out, you can avoid snagging up so often. Good catfish locations are Minnesota Slough, Big Slough and Winneshiek Slough in Pool 9; Harpers Slough, McDonald Slough and State Line Slough in Pool 10; and Cassville Slough, Picayune Chute, Jack Oak Slough, and Hurricane Chute in Pool 11. In Pools 12-15, try the wing dams and sloughs with current for channel catfish. Don't overlook fishing for freshwater drum (sheepshead). Drum numbers are sky high in the river and can easily be caught using a sliding egg sinker and a hook baited with worms or crayfish. Drum are a great fish for getting kids into some action. You may want to concentrate your efforts in and around the sand flats and wing dams. Northern pike are being caught in a variety of locations in **Pools 9-11**. Pike can be found in the backwater areas and side channels, but most are caught near the shore by the wing dams. White spinner baits work the best. Good pike areas include De Soto Bay and Lansing in Pool 9, the Lock and Dam near Lynxville in Pool 10, and Cassville Slough in Pool 11. Largemouth bass fishing has been good in **Pools 9-15**. These fish have been caught in very good numbers throughout the year and are generally found in the backwater lakes. Since current water levels on the river are so low, largemouth bass are also being caught along the main channel borders, in the flowing sloughs and side channels. A variety of lures will work, but the traditional tube jigs, top-water lures and spinner baits fished along wood or rock structure or vegetation work best. Smallmouth are being caught in good numbers in **Pools 9-11**. Smallmouth are found in swift current areas with rock. These areas are generally associated with the main channel habitats, including bank stabilization rock, day markers or wing dam habitats. Spinners and crankbaits are the lure of choice for these feisty fish. Walleye fishing has been fair on the wing dams and running sloughs in **Pools 12-15** using crankbaits or night crawlers. Bluegill fishing is fair in **Pools 12-15** along the wing dams and side channels with little or no current. Crappie fishing is fair to good on minnows fished in **Pools 12-15** in the deeper sloughs and main channel borders with little current.

Upper Iowa River (Winneshiek and Allamakee): Smallmouth bass fishing is good to excellent on jigs and crankbaits.

Turkey River (Howard, Winneshiek, Fayette and Clayton): Smallmouth bass fishing is excellent on black jigs and crankbaits.

Shell Rock River (Floyd): Channel catfish are good on night crawlers and cut baits.

Volga River (Fayette and Clayton): Smallmouth bass fishing is good to excellent on black jigs and crankbaits.

Cedar (Black Hawk): Fishing for channel catfish is fair using chicken liver or prepared baits. Try fishing around brush piles after dark for best success.

Maquoketa (Delaware) and **Wapsipinicon rivers** (Buchanan): Fishing is fair for walleyes and northern pike using jigs tipped with a night crawler or crankbaits fished around the deeper holes.

Casey Lake (Tama): Largemouth bass fishing is good using shallow-diving crank baits. Channel catfish are good on chicken liver.

Trout fishing and stream conditions are excellent! For current trout stocking information, contact the Big Spring Hatchery at 563-245-1699, Decorah Hatchery at 563-382-3315 or Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-5736. You can also view the trout stocking calendar on-line by going to www.iowadnr.com, clicking on **Fish and Fishing** and then choosing **Favorite Pages**.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

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